

L 024

October 24, 2007

California High-Speed Rail Authority  
EIR/EIS Comments  
925 L Street, Suite 1425  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Subject: Draft Bay Area to Central Valley High-Speed Train Program  
Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement  
(EIR/EIS)**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Bay Area to Central Valley High-Speed Train Program EIR/EIS. The San Francisco Bay Trail Project is a nonprofit organization administered by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) that plans, promotes and advocates for the implementation of a continuous 500-mile bicycling and hiking path around San Francisco Bay. When complete, the trail will pass through 47 cities, all nine Bay Area counties, and cross seven toll bridges. To date, 290 miles, slightly more than half the length of the Bay Trail alignment has been developed.

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Proximity to San Francisco Bay is one of the most defining characteristics of the Bay Trail. The trail provides unique vistas and open spaces but also connects urban areas and provides alternative transportation opportunities. The proposed high-speed rail corridors could potentially impact existing and proposed Bay Trail alignments.

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### **Plans and Policies**

The Final Bay Area to Central Valley High-Speed Train Program EIR/EIS should include specific mention of the Bay Trail Plan in the Plans and Policies section. For your information, State Senate Bill 100, passed into law in 1987, directed the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to develop a plan "for a continuous recreational corridor which will extend around the perimeter of San Francisco and San Pablo Bays." The Bay Trail Plan, adopted by ABAG in July 1989, includes a proposed alignment; a set of policies to guide the future selection, design and implementation of routes; and strategies for implementation and financing. Resolutions of support have been passed in all shoreline jurisdictions recognizing the importance of this regional project.

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### **San Francisco Bay Crossing**

Of the six proposed high speed rail alternative corridors identified in the draft EIR/S: San Francisco to San Jose, Oakland to San Jose, San Jose to Central Valley, East Bay to Central Valley, San Francisco Bay Crossings, and Central Valley, only the San Francisco Bay Crossing rail alignment alternative has features that could potentially impact the Bay

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Trail. Described on page S-8 in the draft document, this alternative would serve the Altamont Pass alignment connecting the San Francisco Peninsula to the East Bay. See Exhibit A, a map identifying the Bay Trail alignment and the proposed rail corridors in the South Bay.

On the west side of San Francisco Bay in San Mateo County, the Bay Trail Plan identifies existing and planned Bay Trail spine in both the City of Menlo Park and East Palo Alto. There is a gap in the Bay Trail between Menlo Park and East Palo Alto that runs along University Avenue, and parallel to the existing rails with future connection to the existing trails in the Ravenswood Open Space Preserve (see Exhibit B). The City of Menlo Park, in an effort to develop alternatives for completing this gap, conducted a Bay Trail Feasibility Study funded in part by the Bay Trail Project. The final High Speed Rail Project EIR/S should address the preferred alignment alternative at that location and discuss potential impacts on the Bay Trail of an active rail corridor, a new station, cut and fill associated with construction, an at-grade structure and it should also take into consideration the Bay Trail and local jurisdiction missions to provide safe and direct access to the bay and shoreline.

Highway 84 along the Dumbarton Bridge provides a vehicle connection between the San Francisco Peninsula and the East Bay. The bridge also has a separated multi-use pathway that is part of the Bay Trail system, used by bicyclists and pedestrians to cross the Bay. The Final EIR/S should include discussion of the preferred alternative for this area, including new high-level bridge or a new transbay tube, and their impacts on existing and proposed Bay Trail segments. The Final EIR/S should also include a discussion of incorporating a trail crossing in conjunction with the rail over-crossing.

On the East Bay side of the Dumbarton Bridge, the Bay Trail exists as bike lanes on Marshlands Road connecting south to the existing trails at the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge and north to Coyote Hills Regional Park (Exhibit B). The draft EIR/S shows the rail as an aerial structure at that location (Figure 2.5-3). The final High Speed Rail project EIR/S should discuss impacts of this structure on the Bay Trail and connecting trails as well as the impacts on the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

## **General Comments**

The final EIR/S should also address:

- connections to existing and proposed regional trails such as the Bay Trail
- specific required setback distances between rail corridors and existing trails
- opportunities for locating trails on the same rail crossing structure
- crossing information and their warning systems
- accommodations for bicycles on trains, in parking structures and in train stations
- access to other means of public transit

As referenced above, the Bay Trail is a regional trail passing through all nine Bay Area counties, and is an important recreational amenity. The Trail alignment is in close proximity to, crosses, or is directly parallel to the rail line in many locations. The final

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EIR/S should address impacts to the San Francisco Bay Trail as a regionally important recreation amenity and alternative transportation corridor.

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft EIR/S. I can be reached at (510) 464-7935 or at [LauraT@abag.ca.gov](mailto:LauraT@abag.ca.gov) if you have any questions about the comments in this letter.

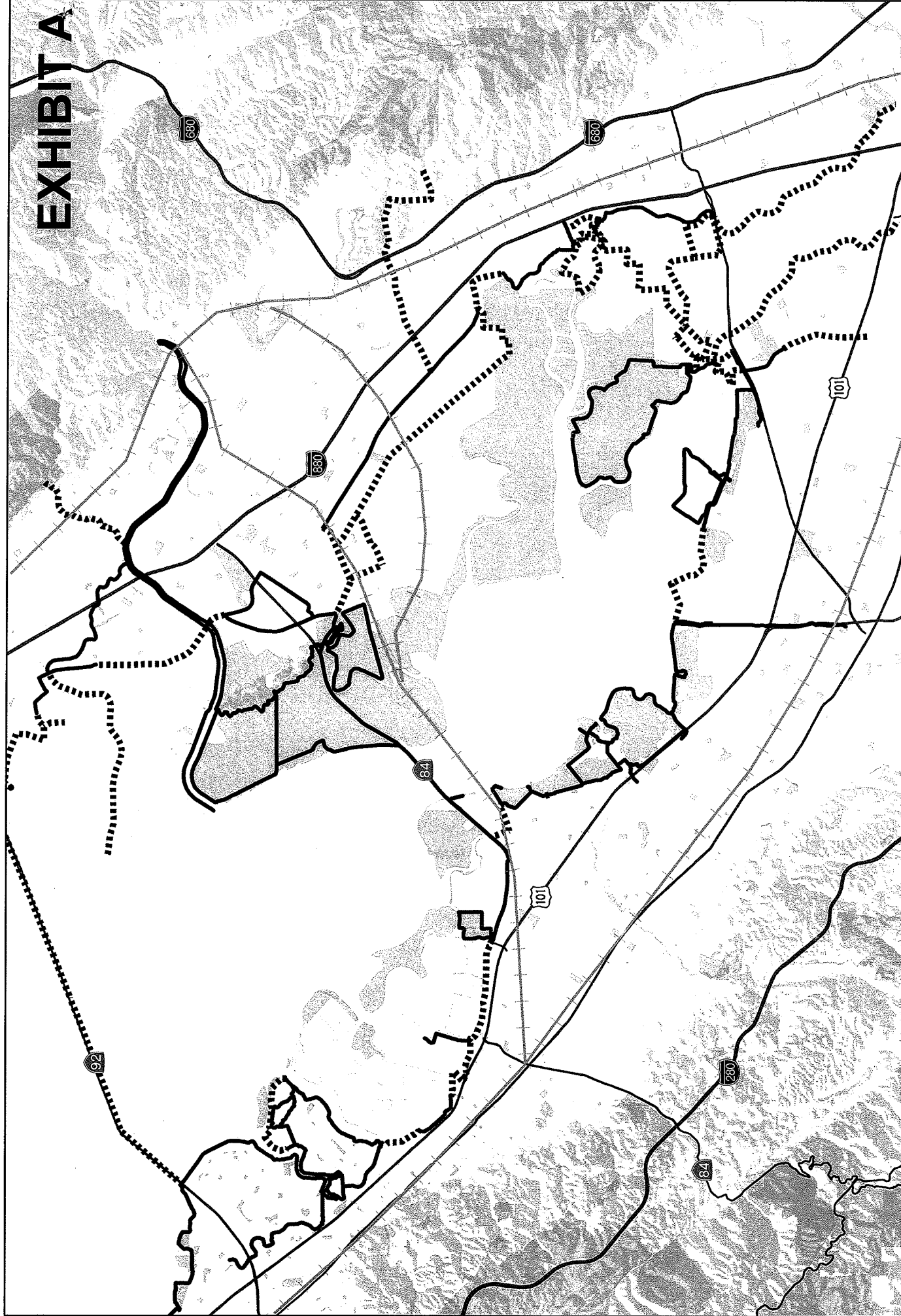
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura Thompson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

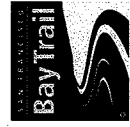
Laura Thompson  
Bay Trail Project Manager

# EXHIBIT A

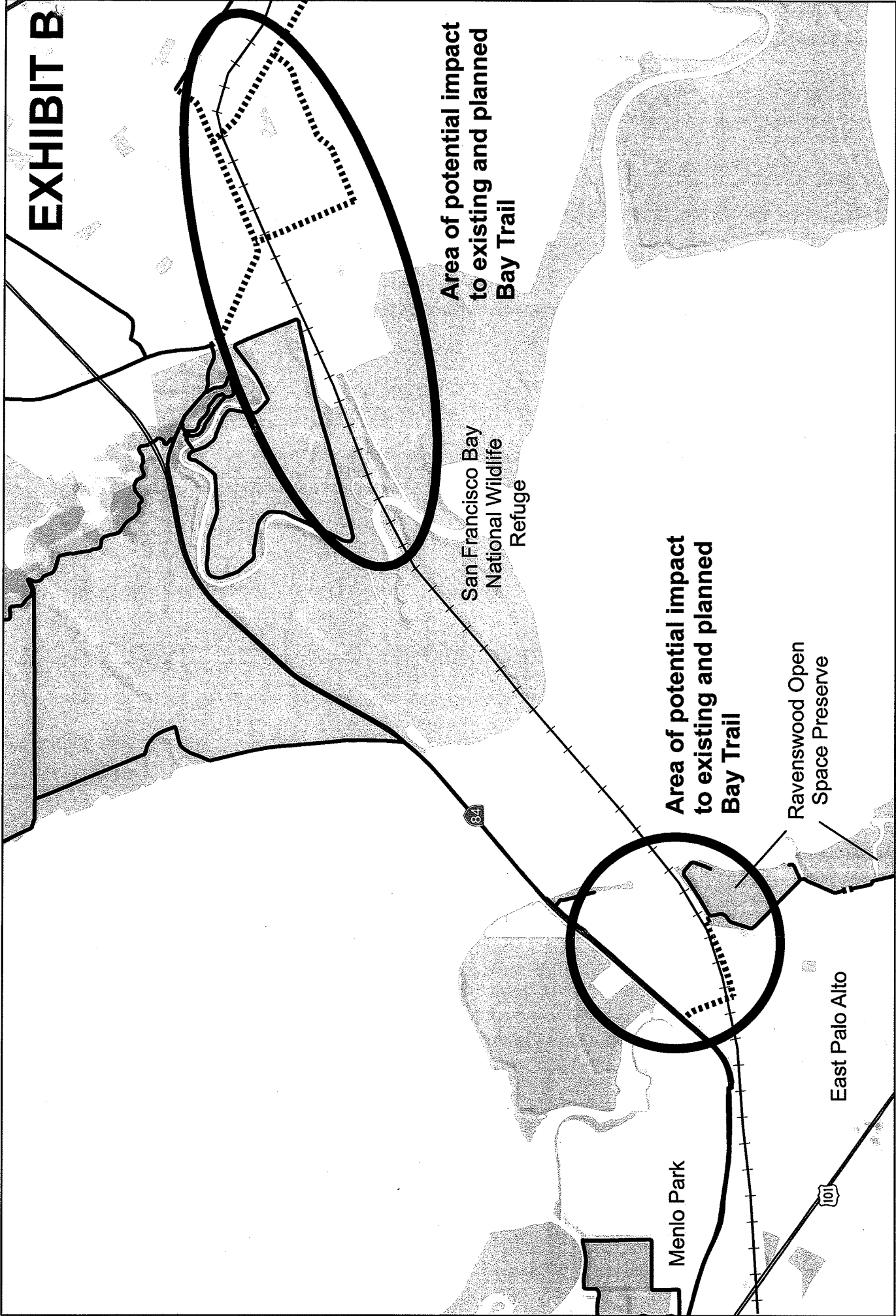


## San Francisco Bay Trail High Speed Train EIR/EIS

- Existing Bay Trail
- Proposed Bay Trail
- Proposed Rail Corridor



# EXHIBIT B



**San Francisco Bay Trail**

High Speed Train EIR/EIS - Potential Impacts

Existing Bay Trail    
 Proposed Bay Trail    
 Potential Impacts    
 Proposed Rail Corridor